

East Side. West Side. All Around The Town

Life Among the Press Agents, Their Manners and Customs, as Noted by Jefferson Machamer



THE PRESS AGENT WHOSE SHOW IS AN ASSURED SUCCESS—HE IS VERY BLASE ABOUT LETTING US USE PHOTOGRAPHS TO MAKE SKETCHES FROM. HE FEELS WE OUGHT TO SIT IN THE LAST ROW—BALCONY—AND DO 'EM THERE—



THE LADY PRESS AGENT WHO VAMPS HER SHOW ACROSS—SHE ALWAYS TRIES TO MUSH US INTO PROMISING A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE PAPER—OR SOMETHING EQUALLY AS TRIVIAL—



THE PRESS BIRD WHO KNOWS HIS SHOW ISN'T WORTH A DANG—BUT MAKES US FEEL THAT A GOOD "SPREAD" ON OUR PAGE WOULD MAKE IT A SUCCESS AT THE NORTH POLE—



THE FOURTH ASSISTANT PRESS AGENT WHO PEDDLES PHOTOGRAPHS. HE IS OUR FRIEND!!!



THE GUSHING P.A. WHO PROMISES TO GIVE ALL OUR FRIENDS BOXES—OR EVEN THE WHOLE THEATER—PROVIDING—ETC—AND THEN SOMEHOW OR OTHER HIS FAVOR SLIPS HIS MIND—



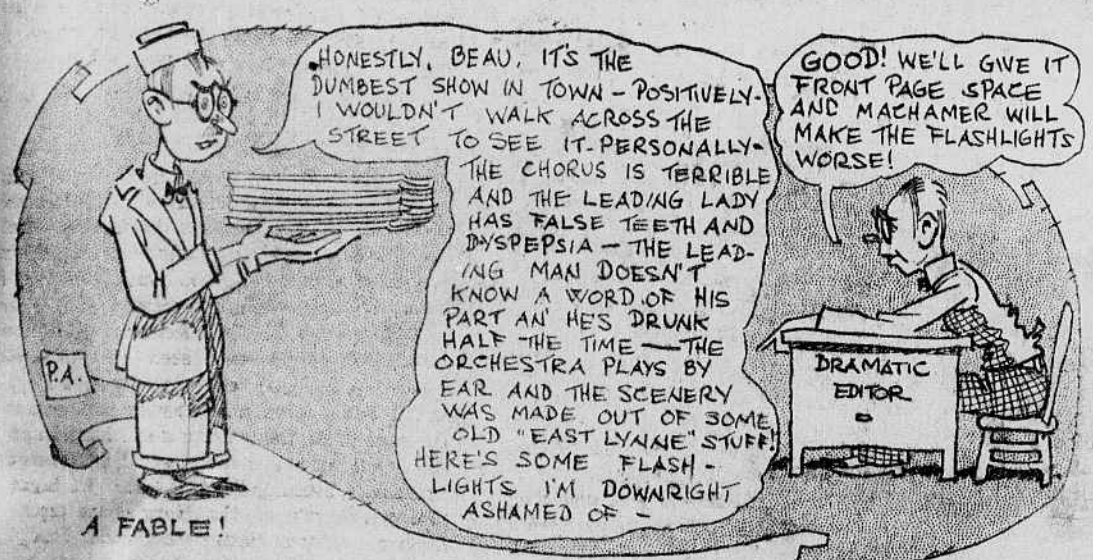
THE PRESS AGENT WHO PARKS HIMSELF CLINKING DISTANCE FROM THE BOX OFFICE THE FIRST WEEK OF HIS SHOW AND MEASURES THE RESULT OF HIS EFFORTS—



YOU AIN'T GONNA PRINT THIS SCANDAL STUFF I NEVER MET THESE FISH—SOCRATES AND PLATO—NOT YOU SAY I'M INTERESTED IN ARE THEY NICE FELLAS?—WHO ARE THEY? SEARCH ME! I SAW 'EM IN AN ENCYCLOPEEDY—I JUST SAID THAT SO'S YOUR WORSHIPPIN' PUBLIC WOULD THINK YOU WERE EDUCATED—AT'S ALL!



WELL—MR. PETER—I WUZ A PRESS AGENT ON EARTH—PERHAPS I CAN DO SOMETHING FOR THIS PLACE—



HONESTLY, BEAU, IT'S THE DUMBEST SHOW IN TOWN—POSITIVELY—I WOULDN'T WALK ACROSS THE STREET TO SEE IT. PERSONALLY—THE CHORUS IS TERRIBLE AND THE LEADING LADY HAS FALSE TEETH AND DYSPEPSIA—THE LEADING MAN DOESN'T KNOW A WORD OF HIS PART AN' HE'S DRUNK HALF THE TIME—THE ORCHESTRA PLAYS BY EAR AND THE SCENERY WAS MADE OUT OF SOME OLD "EAST LYANE" STUFF. HERE'S SOME FLASH—LIGHTS I'M DOWNRIGHT ASHAMED OF—



HEY—YOU DOWN THERE—MR. DOWNEY—WHADYA MEAN "START SOMETHING"—I'LL SPILL INK ONYA IF YOU AIN'T CAREFUL!



SHOWING SCALE OF THEATRICAL IMPORTANCE WHICH WE HAVE GLEANED FROM OUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES—



PADRIETTE DE ZABOOT—ALIAS MINNIE MURPHY—CHORUS GIRL—HAS JUST READ OF HER LUXURIOUS APARTMENT BEING BURGLARIZED WITH A LOSS OF \$20,000 IN JEWELS—"AIN'T IT JUST TERRIBLE!" SHE LAUGHS—GASPINGLY!

By FAIRFAX DOWNEY

SO FAR as this department knows, the only institution of any size in New York that has no press agent is the Aquarium. And it would seem to be an institution splendidly equipped to—well, not to support a press agent, for the rumor is it takes a good deal of money to do that—let us say, ideally tried to the talents of a press agent. Think of all the fish stories ready to his hand! And with the denizens of the Aqua-

rium confined as they are, it would never be a case of the "big one that got away"; so, naturally, all the yarns would be swallowed hook, line and sinker. The historic old spot is replete with copy. Of course, it is pretty quiet in the fish zoo now where once the voice of Jenny Lind rang, but an energetic press agent with the help of a few seals would wake it up. As the place is now, however, with admission free, a press agent in the Aquarium would be a veritable fish out of water. Literally that.

But elsewhere there is no dearth of press agents—those lineal descendants of the ancient bards and minstrels. Their forefathers' function was only to entertain. It made no difference if no one believed them—although everybody did, for that matter. When the bard would arise and render some wild saga or ballad about giants and dragons and things,

all the company in the castle would take it as fact. After each stanza the baron would swear, "Strewth!" and there would be no contradiction. It was when it came to be a question of buying a ticket and going to see the dragon or the giant, or whatever the spectacle might be, that carking doubt crept in. But unworthy doubts have been dismissed by

the press agents growing all the more enthusiastic and imaginative. From inventing myths and legends which never paid until attractively published centuries later they turned to a more remunerative field. They will go to lengths, but never as far as Aesop, an earlier writer of fables, who finally was condemned to go jump off a cliff. Not even the press agents in the "movie" field approve of such methods for personal use.

they sometimes press theater tickets on one—that is, all the most efficient ones we have known have done that. Press agents in the literary and art fields are known as "logrollers." This is a distinctly minor branch of endeavor, for it is so indirect and uncertain. The other fellow may decide not to play after all. It is that very uncertainty which caused us to take and keep a vow not to mention the work of the artist above until he starts something.

Theater press agents are so called because



CITY CROSS-SECTIONS

by George S. Chappell

with pictures by William Hogarth Jr.



ings of what we know ones call "the selling end." What a revelation it has been! A book now fills me with reverence—even with fear.

The easiest part of making a book is writing it. Don't let authors fool you on that. Sometimes I meet fellow writers who look all haggard and woebegone and who say: "I'm all in! I've been working like a dog for the last three months on my new book." Of course they have. That is their business. What they have really been doing is enjoying themselves. There is nothing so exciting and exhilarating as creative work. And it is so free, so unhampered by outside conditions and sordid things like shops and stockyards and stock markets, which oppress other kinds of business! It is really glorious sport, writing. When it is over the author suffers a reaction and, being human, likes to glorify himself a little on the score of hard work.

I shall never forget my feelings when I left the office of my publishers after signing the contract for my first book. I seemed to be able to spring lightly on my toes half the length of a city block. As a matter of fact, I am flatfooted and overweight. But my soul was aflame. I sang gayly and laughed in the faces of passers-by, who eyed me with distrust.

"A nut," said one. "How did he get it so early in the day?" asked another.

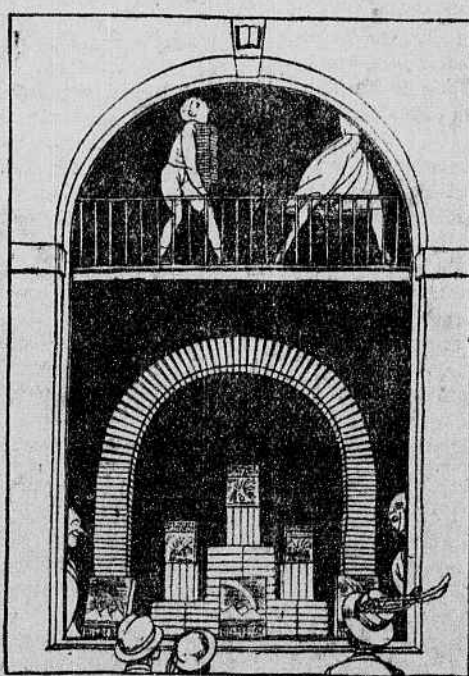
My work, I conceived, was done. My job was merely to rest and wait for the royalties. And then my publishers began to get busy. At regular intervals throughout the day my telephone would ring. Never had I realized that there were so many things a publisher could ask an author to do. The technical detail of correcting proof was delightful, but I have never been able to learn how to make the funny little marks which professional proof-readers use, the marginal curlicues and dots which tell the typesetter exactly what to do. My corrections are always in the form of elaborate notes, which obscure so much of the text that consultations have to be called and the matter thrashed out at the printer's. Then there

was the matter of illustrations and what pages they were to go opposite and the captions for them and who'd pose for them, and did I have a good photograph of myself, and a hundred and one other things—the cover design, the jacket and so on. Just think, I never knew before that books wore jackets! I always thought of them as going around naked. Some that I have read ought to wear overcoats and mufflers, I'm quite convinced.

Well, for a month following what I thought was the completion of my book I was the busiest little author in New York. The matter of my picture was, as always, an embarrassing one to me. People always say, "Have you a good picture of yourself?" What I really want is not a good picture, but a good-looking picture. I don't see how the two qualities can be combined. Anyway, if my phiz is going to be published I want it to be a help to my work, not a menace. Of course, the result in this case was that we chose the most bearable presentment and let it go at that.

"Well," said my publishers, "I think that cleans us up. Everything is 'jake.' Oh, by the way, did you write that little dedication?"

Thank heaven, I had it! Once more I left the sanctum in a warm glow of elation. The work was over.



The up-to-date window dresser had given his fancy full sway

My brain was atrophied from composing silly "personals" about myself and from writing technical letters on subjects of which I was totally ignorant.

My publisher developed an amazing fondness for prospective book reviewers and owlish old gentlemen who wielded mysterious power in departments of literary criticism. I became so tired of being pleasant to people I didn't know that I prayed for the publication date as one longs for land during a hurricane. And it came at last. The day arrived when the

of my publisher. "I want a little biographical sketch," he said. "Main facts of your life, how you started writing, a few humorous incidents, you know—about a thousand words. And, say, to-morrow you and I are luncheoning with Webster, of 'The Chronicle.' He's very important. When you get time dash me off about five hundred words on the book, bringing in some bunk about the Middle West. I'm going to kid the papers out there. G'bye."

Before I had finished my Middle Western essay I had, at the instigation of my publishers, become involved in a violent newspaper wrangle with an eminent critic and had contracted to do articles for trade magazines covering fields as varied as music, dyestuffs and automobiles. Interviewers rang me up and tracked me down. As the publication date drew near the publicity pace increased.

papers bore the extra-large ad of my book, with the magic words "Out to-day."

Another thrill was mine. Now all was done that could be done, I ruminated. The rest was on the lap of the gods. Never was I more mistaken. The rest was on the lap of my publisher. The Monday following publication he rang me up. "Your first reviews are very encouraging. Now everything depends on what we do this month. We must hit the line hard for the next thirty days and put this thing over big! I'm just sending Miss Bowen over to you; she's from 'Women's Work'—wants an interview; and, say, can you shoot me about twelve hundred words for 'The Perfumer's Manual'? Lunch to-morrow with Steffins, of 'The Record'—very important—g'bye."

The next month was a nightmare of official meetings, lunches, dinners and teas. I talked to women's clubs, college clubs, press clubs and church clubs. As the month and I wanted together my eager-eyed publisher said briskly: "The next two weeks we will make a drive on the retail departments. I've fixed up a route for you, taking in all the big book stores and department stores. They are advertising you to appear in person, meet people and sign books, you know. Then you'll meet all the clerks—the man and the girl who really sell the books—this is very important for the Xmas trade, very important. Get next to the guy behind the counter, see? We'll make a celebrity out of you yet, kid."

He was as good—or as bad—as his word. At his behest I convened amiably with countless strange females, who bore down upon me to have books signed, to ask me what they should do with their manuscripts and whether I was any relation of Herman Chappell, of Toledo. Several of my friends followed my city route to kid me. In the interims between wielding my fountain pen and murmuring nothings to customers I cultivated the sales force as directed. To do them justice they were as bored as I and seemed plainly to say "I wish he'd get out of our aisles and let us do our work." I was able to establish a vague personal relationship with some of the younger clerks. Mr.



There still remain many of the old aristocrats of the book trade

Hogarth shows us one of the new order, the enthusiastic salesman who often reads his wares. This type I could approach. But there still remain many of the old-fashioned aristocrats of the book trade, austere seniors, who only sell you a book as a mark of special favor. To them all this pow-wow of publicity was distinctly distasteful.

I hinted to one of these ancient conservatives that I, too, suffered somewhat from the strenuousness of modern methods.

"It's terrible, sir," he said, solemnly. "They have all kinds of goin'-on in this store—lectures and readin's, and whatall. And have you seen our window? It's a disgrace!"

I inspected it. The up-to-date window dresser had given his modernist fancy full sway, having constructed a fantastic arch to attract the passer-by. And the books were mine! With a feeling of guilt I hurried on. What next? I wondered. The following day I wearily picked up my phone to hear my publisher say: "Listen, son! Barnum's circus opens next week at the Garden. They're going to have a parade of the freaks, and it occurs to me!" But I never heard the rest of his sentence. At the thought of what he might propose I fainted.